

NATIONAL EPA-TRIBAL SCIENCE COUNCIL

Conference Call Summary

Monday, July 18, 2011

2:00 – 3:00 p.m. Eastern Daylight Saving Time

Participants

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Roll Call/Introductions

Monica Rodia, Executive Secretary of the National EPA-Tribal Science Council (TSC), welcomed the members to the teleconference and took roll. She introduced the new Office of Research and Development intern, Allison Martin, and new TSC members, Mike Durglo (Region 8) and Orville Huntington (Region 10, permanent Alaska representative).

June Meeting Minutes

Monica reported that the TSC conference call minutes from June 2011 had been reviewed, finalized and distributed to the members. She currently is reviewing the June face-to-face meeting minutes and will send them to the TSC members for their review later this week. In response to her question, the members did not have any comments or questions regarding the minutes or the timeline.

Recap of the TSC Face-to-Face Meeting in Maine

Jeff Mears explained that the National Tribal Science Priorities (TSPs) were finalized during the face-to-face meeting. He added that the Region 5 Regional Tribal Operations Committee (RTOC) meeting would be held August 2–3, 2011, in Red Lake, Minnesota.

Ted Coopwood said that he appreciated everyone's work in finalizing the TSPs at the face-to-face meeting. He specifically thanked Jeff and Katie Renwick for their leadership, lauded new member Neil Patterson for his initiative. Monica thanked Dan Kusnierz and the Penobscot Indian Nation for hosting the meeting, describing some of the tribal events; including a Penobscot River canoe trip and traditional tribal meal on china, for those members who could not attend. Those in attendance had a wonderful experience.

National TSPs

Ted has spoken to Clay Bravo, who wholeheartedly supports and endorses the TSPs. Clay will be drafting a formal letter to the TSC stating that the National Tribal Caucus (NTC) fully supports and endorses the two TSPs, which complement the NTC's tribal environmental priorities. Clay congratulated the TSC and stated that he is proud of the Council's accomplishments. Monica explained that a formal endorsement by the NTC is significant. EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson and the Assistant Administrator of the Office of International and Tribal Affairs (Michelle DePass) were present at the National Tribal Operations Committee (NTOC) meeting held the previous week. Ted said that the ultimate goal in developing the TSPs was for the EPA Administrator to formally announce that the TSPs are supported by the Agency. Ted added that the TSC members can be proud to know that this is exactly what happened at the NTOC meeting. The TSPs were mentioned several times by Administrator Jackson, Clay, and Michelle DePass as a model for how the Agency and the tribes can collaborate. The TSC members should be very proud of their accomplishments, despite the fact that the TSP process was not perfect.

Ted explained that he plans on visiting Jeff in Wisconsin to discuss the next steps. He added it absolutely is unprecedented to have the EPA Administrator fully support the priorities for inclusion in EPA's strategic planning and budget processes. Tia Chullakorn thanked Monica and Ted for their hard work in these efforts. Jeff agreed that this was great news. Curtis Munoz congratulated the TSC and noted that the Council had come a long way since the 2008 NTOC meeting in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. Ted thanked everyone for their passion, knowledge and guidance.

Monica explained that the next step is to speak to program and regional offices including the Office of Research and Development to determine how the TSPs can be implemented at the community level. This will require that the TSC members work together; everyone will have an equal role in the process. Ted

explained that he and Clay had spoken about the other submitted tribal issues that were not chosen as TSPs and how important they are. Ted proposed that he visit with Jeff in September so that he can learn about what needs to be done by EPA and the tribes to move these issues forward. Jeff explained that the Oneida tribe was hosting the National Tribal Lands Forum from August 23–25, 2011, in Green Bay, Wisconsin. If it was possible for Ted to attend, this could be an opportunity to meet with the Oneida and other tribes; unfortunately, Ted will be on vacation during this time, as will Felicia Wright. Beth Jackson said that some people from her office will be in attendance.

Ted asked the TSC members about their expected next steps. Felicia would like to see the Office of Water work with the TSC to incorporate the TSPs into the National Water Program Climate Change Strategy. Ted asked the Tribal Caucus members about the practical applications of the TSPs in Indian Country. Jeff thought that the first step was the education component. What is climate change? What is climate change adaptation? Katie agreed that education is important, particularly how to apply and incorporate traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) into climate change adaptation plans. Ted thought that the TSC needed to develop an appropriate strategy to accomplish this. The TSPs are living, breathing documents with the ability to grow. The flexibility exists to accomplish a great deal of different things, and it is necessary to provide the right information to these programs so that they apply to the communities in Indian Country.

Katie said that, regarding climate change, it was important to ensure that the tribes understand what will be changing within their area. Tia said that some tribes and Alaska Native villages already have initiated projects that are similar to what the TSC is trying to accomplish. Ted thought that a good first step was to learn what efforts already are underway and harness the expertise. Ken Bailey thought that it was important to incorporate TEK into the Tribal-Focused Risk Exposure and Screening Tool (T-FERST). Monica asked whether Ken saw a role for T-FERST in the TSP focused on climate change. Ken responded that he thought that T-FERST could play a role in creating a plan to adapt to climate change. Jeff said that climate change would be the single largest international issue from this generation forward and that is an integral part of all media. Therefore, the tribes should include climate change in their work plans, and EPA needs to be aware of this and the significance of the issue as well. Monica noted that Steve Etsitty from the Navajo Nation asked EPA to examine how its Science and Technology dollars could be converted to grants for the tribes; how the Agency provides funding to the tribes is important and will need to be addressed.

Katie commented that the Institute for Tribal Environmental Professionals (ITEP) hosts climate change meetings and training; perhaps ITEP could expand the training to include information that is important to the TSC.

Orville Huntington explained that he had had a chance to review the TSPs and that the release of contaminants and occurrences that are the result of climate change (e.g., longer summers, permafrost melts that release contaminants) are priorities in Alaska. He thought that the TEK TSP should include standardized language. Orville would not change the TSPs, but he would like to add to them.

Announcements

Monica explained that Angela Page of the National Center for Environmental Research (NCER) would provide the TSC members with information about the new Request for Applications (RFA) on the Research and Demonstration of Innovative Drinking Water Treatment Technologies. Angela provided an overview of EPA's Science To Achieve Results and Small Business Innovation Research external grant programs, which provide competitive awards for nonprofit and for-profit organizations, respectively. NCER research spans four of EPA's research programs: Air, Climate, and Energy; Safe and Sustainable Water Resources; Chemical Safety for Sustainability; and Sustainable and Healthy Communities. Normally, the RFA process takes 18 months from the time a project officer convenes a writing team until

the awards are made; only 6 months were allotted for the current RFA, as the awards must be made by December 31, 2011.

The process includes a two-prong evaluation. The peer-review division identifies external peer reviewers, and following this external review, the applications are internally (programmatically) reviewed. If any EPA Caucus members would like to serve as programmatic reviewers, Angela will try to place them on the review team based on their expertise. If any of the Tribal Caucus members are not interested in applying, they are invited to become external peer reviewers. All TSC members were welcome to suggest potential external peer reviewers. Administrator Jackson requested that language be included in the grant that encourages minority academic institutions (historically black colleges and universities, Hispanic institutions, Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCU), etc.) to apply, so it is important that the external peer reviewers can review these applications from this perspective.

The Agency has shifted from examining contaminant groups to developing innovative treatment technologies to manage and control contaminants; therefore, this RFA is focused on identifying, developing and demonstrating new and innovative technologies and approaches in small systems. The RFA includes only innovative technologies that treat chemical contaminants and groups of chemical contaminants, such as pesticides, pharmaceuticals, naturally occurring contaminants and other emerging compounds. Angela encouraged those associated with TCUs to apply. The RFA will award six projects at \$500,000 each for a total of \$3 million. Applications from minority academic institutions that pass the peer-review process with "Very Good" or "Excellent" ratings automatically will be awarded. The electronic application website automatically closes after 11:59 p.m. on August 25, 2011, so no applications can be accepted after this time.

Additionally, the National Risk Management Research Laboratory in Cincinnati, Ohio, has recently announced a Water Technology Innovation Cluster effort. A complementary center is being established, and Angela invited the TSC members to join the writing team for this effort. Monica promised to supply the names of potential peer reviewers to Angela; the TSC has contacts at Haskell Indian Nations University and Salish Kootenai College. Angela explained that the presentations from the recent webinars regarding the RFA will be posted online soon. She finished by complementing the members on their enthusiasm and passion.

Ted explained that OITA has spearheaded the development of a new effort called the Tribal ecoAmbassadors Program which will focus on conducting research in partnership with Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs). Professors from TCUs will receive funding and technical support from EPA to solve the highest priority environmental problems in Indian Country. He added that there is opportunity for both climate change and TEK to be incorporated into TCU curricula and implemented Tribal communities.

Ted thanked the members for participating and adjourned the conference call at 3:01 p.m.

Action Items

- ✧ Ted will plan a time in September when he can visit with Jeff in Wisconsin to plan the next steps.
- ✧ Monica will supply the names of potential peer reviewers to Angela.

**NATIONAL EPA-TRIBAL SCIENCE COUNCIL
CONFERENCE CALL
JULY 18, 2011**

2:00 P.M. – 3:00 P.M. EASTERN DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME

Call-in Number: **866-299-3188**

Access Code: **2025648322#**

FINAL AGENDA

- 2:00 – 2:05 Roll Call/Introductions
- 2:05 – 2:10 June conference call minutes distributed for review and finalized
- 2:10 – 2:20 Recap of TSC Face-to-Face Meeting in Maine
- TSC Co-chairs (Jeff Mears and Ted Coopwood)
- 2:20 – 2:40 National Tribal Science Priorities
- Feedback from National Tribal Caucus on priorities: (1) Climate Change and (2) Integration of Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) in Environmental Science Policy, and Decision-Making.
 - Report out on the National Tribal Operations Committee Meeting and how the TSC priorities were incorporated in NTOC tribal environmental priorities and climate change presentations.
 - Next steps and discussion on role of the TSC in implementing the priorities.
- 2:40 – 3:00 Announcement(s)
- EPA Request for Applications (RFA) and Supporting Webinars for Research and Demonstration of Innovative Drinking Water Treatment Technologies in Small Systems.
 - Open Date: June 23, 2011; Close Date: August 25, 2011 (Angela Page, National Center for Environmental Research)
 - RFA: http://www.epa.gov/ncer/rfa/2011/2011_star_drinkingwater.html
 - Webinars: <http://www.epa.gov/ncer/dwwebinars/>
 - Tribal ecoAmbassadors Program: <http://www.epa.gov/ecoambassadors/tribal/>

Next conference call—**August 15, 2011**, from 2:00 – 3:00 pm EDT